

B2 65. (Amended) The preparation of claim 63, wherein the polypeptide includes at least 150 amino acids residues of an N-terminal half of the *hedgehog* protein.

66. (Reiterated) The preparation of claim 63, wherein the polypeptide includes at least 100 amino acids of an extracellular domain of the *hedgehog* protein.

B3 67. (Amended) The preparation of claim 63, wherein the polypeptide includes at least a portion of a *hedgehog* protein corresponding to a 19kd fragment of an extracellular domain of the *hedgehog* protein.

68. (Reiterated) The preparation of claim 63, wherein the *hedgehog* protein is encoded by a gene of a vertebrate organism.

*The amended claims are re-stated below to reflect changes with respect to the last filing.*

63. (Amended) A preparation of a polypeptide comprising a *hedgehog* polypeptide sequence including ~~a bioactive fragment of~~ at least 50 amino acid residues of an N-terminal half of a *hedgehog* protein, which polypeptide is formulated for topical application to skin ~~epithelial~~ tissue.

65. (Amended) The preparation of claim 63, wherein the polypeptide includes at least 150 ~~50~~ amino acids residues of an N-terminal half of the *hedgehog* protein.

67. (Amended) The preparation of claim 63, wherein the polypeptide includes at least a portion of ~~a the~~ *hedgehog* protein corresponding to a 19kd fragment of an extracellular domain of the *hedgehog* protein.